

# Mayflower provided few clues to history

By John Chaffee  
The Patriot Ledger

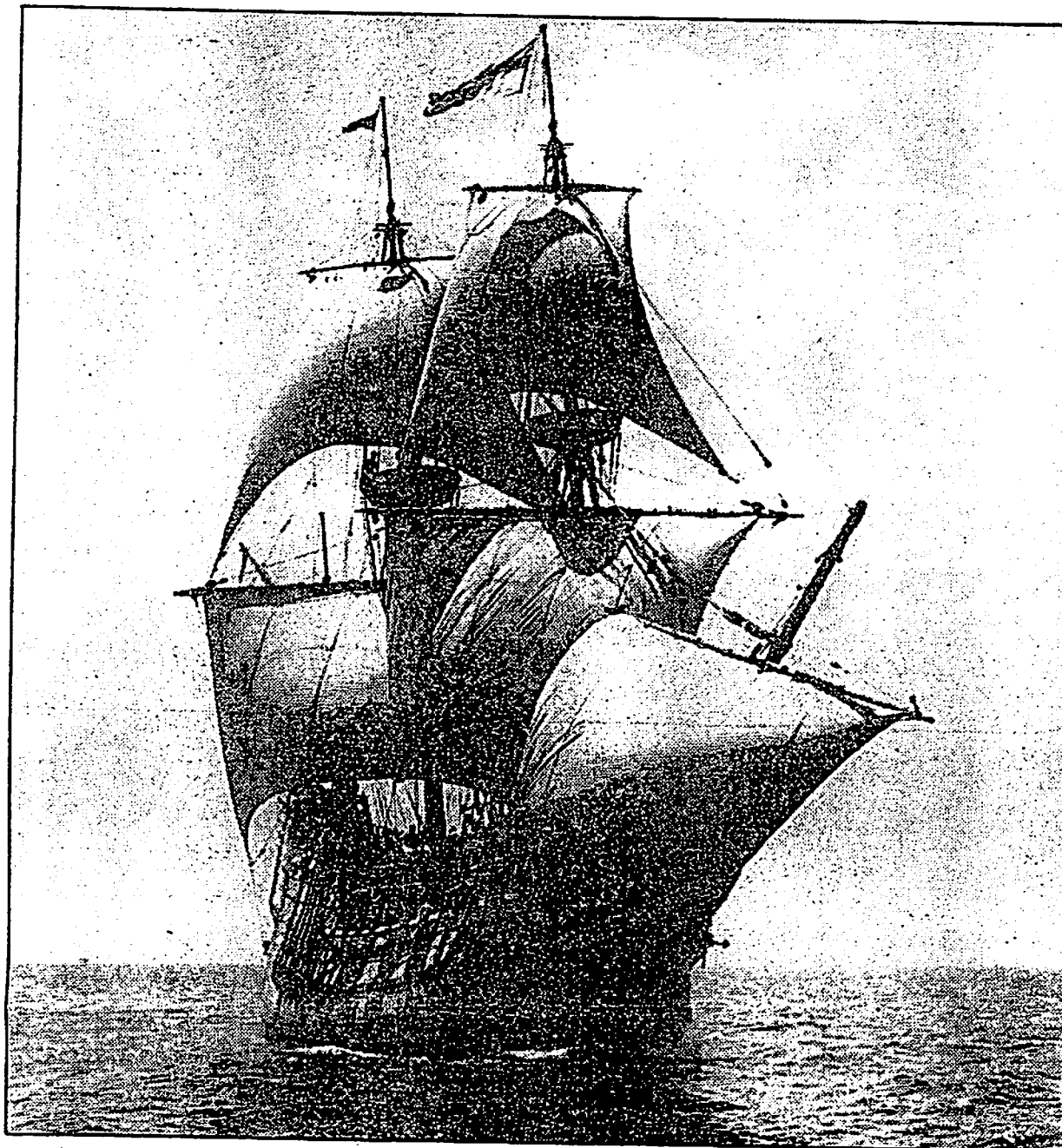
PLYMOUTH — Few ships in American history are more famous, yet historians actually know very little about the *Mayflower*.

Carolyn Freeman Travers, head of research at Plimoth Plantation, said there were at least 26 ships named *Mayflower* at the time the Pilgrims set sail from England in 1620.

Their vessel was a three-masted bark of about 200 tons, probably of late 16th century construction, she said. It was definitely a merchant vessel, because passenger ships were unknown at the time.

"The voyage itself was sort of the culmination of many problems," Travers said, recalling the failure of the sister ship *Speedwell* to get more than a few days out of first Southampton and then Dartmouth before being abandoned in Plymouth, England.

There were 102 passengers and about 25 crew members on the original *Mayflower*, Travers said. One passenger and one crew member died during the 66-day voyage from Plymouth to Cape Cod, and another passenger, William Bradford's wife, drowned in what is now Provincetown Harbor.



Plimoth Plantation photo

There was a birth during the voyage as well: Oceanus Hopkins.

The voyage itself was probably "hideously boring," Travers speculated. "You're below deck most of the time."

The Pilgrims were aiming for what is now New York, Travers noted, but it was then considered part of northern Virginia, "so they weren't far off."

They dropped anchor in Plymouth Harbor on Dec. 21, 1620 after scouting all of Cape Cod Bay for a suitable place to settle, Travers said.

What is now Plymouth had been cleared for an Indian settlement that had been abandoned a few years earlier because of the plague.

*Mayflower* left Plymouth in April 1620 and arrived back in England on May 6. Her master, Christopher Jones, who owned a quarter of the vessel, died the next year, and in 1624 it was sold for scrap, fetching 128 pounds, 8 shilling and 4 pence.

There were 102 passengers and about 25 crew members on the original *Mayflower*. One passenger and one crew member died during the 66-day voyage from Plymouth to Cape Cod.

## Mayflower II ready to set sail on its own

### ■ SAIL

Continued from Page 1

he said. "I don't want any confusion, so it will be: 20-degrees right rudder, 20-degrees left rudder."

The helmsman, long-time Plantation employee Paul Disalvatore of Plymouth, will stand below deck, his hands on the whipstaff, a long pole that moves the tiller.

Burke will shout directions to Disalvatore through a conning hatch. At the same time, Burke said, the helmsman will look aloft through the hatch to "steer by the sails."

Disalvatore is the only member of the crew who has previously sailed on *Mayflower II*. He was aboard in 1964 when the ship lowered its topsails briefly in Cape Cod Bay for a television documentary.

As far as anyone can remember, the last time the square-rigged *Mayflower II* appeared under full sail was in June 1957 when the vessel arrived in Plymouth after sailing across the Atlantic from England, where she was built.

Burke said he'd have "sailors in the rig on the way out and back."

"There'll be ample opportunity for people with cameras to get some good photographs," Burke promised.

Plimoth Plantation is providing viewing space on official escort vessels for \$25 per person. These are the only boats the Coast Guard will allow within the "safety zone" of the turnaround.

*Mayflower II* has been made seaworthy over the past

year, thanks in large part to a group of local volunteers known as "Friends of the *Mayflower*."

They helped install new oak deck beams, Douglas fir decking, rigging and sails. Recently, they helped give the 106.5-foot vessel a fresh coat of paint. Most of them will be part of the crew for Wednesday's sail.

Burke, a licensed ship's master, has been training them on basic seamanship for several weeks. After a dress rehearsal early Saturday morning, they will have a few days to wait before their final exam.

## Crew to include volunteers, Plimoth Plantation workers

PLYMOUTH — The crew of *Mayflower II* will include 13 employees of Plimoth Plantation and 11 "Friends of the *Mayflower*" volunteers.

Plantation employees will be John Reed, Ted Curtin, Bob Johnson, Reed Remington, Abera Delaney, Marietta Mullin, Wink Grise, Rick McKee, Rudi and Norbert Palenstyn and Doug Ozelius.

Volunteers include George Cushman and Garland Hill, Kingston; Charlie Bowman, Anthony Mayo and Peter Palenstyn, Plymouth; Dick Anderson, Duxbury; Pete Belanger and Don Severy, Manomet; Al Kenney, Hull; and Ed Bartholemew and Peter Condrick, Hingham.

Paul Disalvatore will be helmsman; Michael Freeman, first mate; and John Burke, master.